DON'T BE AN ASSHOLE

AN UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO HEALTHY & PRODUCTIVE CRITIQUE

ART 163

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HOPE THIS HELPS, ASSHOLE

♡

WHAT is a CRITIQUE?

When you think of critique, one may think criticize (which is no fun) BUT this is an **ART** critique so as Jeannette has said "**IT is not time to rip someone a new ASSHOLE**". With critique comes care and there are ways to discuss work and give feedback in a **healthy** & **productive** way.

We hope this book helps facilitate that!

That being said, not being an asshole doesn't mean you can't give feedback that may be negative. Say it, but do it **nicely**

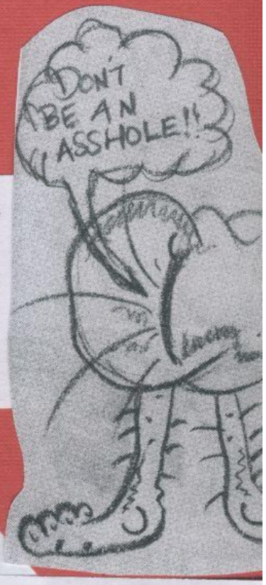
You just worked on a piece for an extended period of time, it's now your **moment** to show your work to your peers

Nerves are okay! I frankly shit my pants before every one! It always goes alright.

(BUT if hits the fan, we have some strategies for that too)

With critique comes care, friends!

Types of F ART CRITS



A cold read - looking at the art object and describing what you see. Try to unpack the artist's intentions and any metaphors you may see in the piece. This happens before the artist speaks on their work.

Before

The artist speaks on their work prior to discussion. This provides context for the audience to talk through themes further.

(Not a shit)

Sandwich

The crit starts with a cold read, audience discusses the work then brings in the artist to talk in the middle. There is then time to further unpack the work with context.

Be honest about the feedback you need!

After

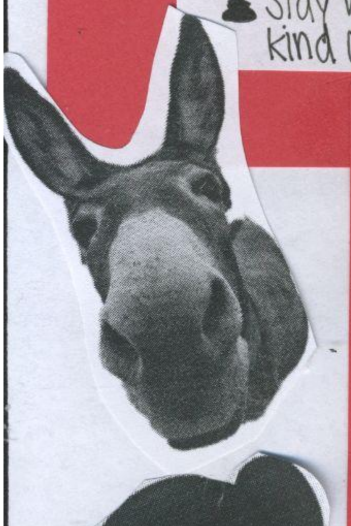
A full cold read of the piece. The audience controls the conversation and the artist gives a comprehensive responce to comments and provides their own take on their work

⚠ LET THE ARTIST DECIDE

CRIT ETIQUETTE

(This list is nonexaustive. Every class is different!)

- Give the artist your full attention during their presentation **(put your phone away!)**
- Follow the Golden Rule
- ALWAYS be respectful. YES, even if you **"dont like it"**
- Ask **questions** about the artwork
- READ THE ROOM
- When you make a statement, **explain why**
- Try to refrain from making value judgements when giving feedback
- ~~This is good~~ "This is successful because"
- Stay within the artist's boundries of what kind of feedback they want



ADD some more!

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If a crit goes sour…

- Tell the artist if something in the artwork is problematic
- Intervene if a comment is insensitive so it doesn't have to be the artist's job to
- Let someone finish their thought before attacking it
- Feedback is meant to help us grow!

Dynamics to look for

from Judith Leemann's article Observations on forms & patterns of critique (2004)

- communication is always double (at least)
  [TONE OF VOICE]
  [NON-VERBAL]
- attention amplifies
  [give more attention to what works so the student can keep thinking on it]
  [spending too much time on what doesn't work will have people to dwell & create a mind frame less likely to create strong work]
- Nap Time
  [pace yourself and stay aware of mindset]
  [take breaks!]
- Group Norms
  [pay attention to social dynamics]

If your work is problematic

effective apology

"I'm sorry; this is what I am doing to correct it"

bad apology

"I'm sorry, but…"

surviving the crit

(From the critique handbook by Kendall Buster & Paula Crawford circa 2007)

leave your ego @ the door

- stand beside your work, not against others critiquing
- Remain Open Minded to critique
- Make work for you, not what others (or instructors) seem to want

active & reactive listening

- respectfully, but firmly respond & engage with questions
- separate yourself from the work so it doesn't feel like a personal attack
- Stay Present to absorb what is being discussed & observed

For all things critique, check out this book!

crit menu

A resource created by Caroline Woolard in 2016

in preparation

I request that all reviewers/critics do the following:

(check all that you want)

__ read a 1-5 page text that I have written about the work

__ read a 1-5 page text by another person that provides context / vocabulary for the work

__ watch the work in advance (a 5-15 minute video, website, or virtual space that can be shared digitally)

__ watch a 5-15 minute video by another person that provides context / vocabulary for the work

__ share source imagery / references images that shape the work

__ require that reviewers go to a specific site / gallery / space in advance

__ other:

group agreements

__ Be on time!

__ Be on topic / no anecdotes that are not helpful

__ We will start with a short activity to become present together in the space.

__ Everyone will learn and use gender pronouns to refer to people: she/her, they/them, he/him.

__ No phones can be used (except for one timing device).

__ Reviewers / artists will engage in active listening.

__ If you are going to miss a class, there should be a collective solution about how to make up class.

__ Reviewers ask themselves, "Why am I talking?" / "Why am I not talking?" (step up or step back)

Artist / Presenter Agreements

__ I will set up for the critique. I will think about the hour my peers are spending with me.

__ I will think about what I want to learn.

__ I will share my goals / intent for the experience and provide context about what you are focusing on.

__ I will tell you what I want feedback on / which work is relevant for the critique.

__ I will learn about the guest critic in advance and present my work in relationship to their interests.

crit menu

Looking at the work

__ take 5 minutes (or more) of collective silence to look at the work
__ take 5 minutes (or more) to make drawings of the work, together
__ take 5 minutes (or more) to write individually about the work
__ take 5 minutes to touch / know the materials used in the work (materials displayed as well as work)
__ other:

Describing the work

__ take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the materials, media, and techniques used
__ take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the the formal qualities of the work (scale, axis, line, elements, palette, texture, etc.)
__ take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the presentation / mode of display / installation of the work
__ take 5 minutes (or more) to describe the audience / participant for this project?
__ other:

Analyzing/Interpreting the work

__ What topics / issues / subject matter does the work aim to address?
__ What kind of local or community-specific knowledges does the work assume?
__ How do the materials / techniques connect to the topics / issues the work addresses?
__ Articulate your worldview / framework for analysis as you speak (feminist, anti-capitalist, modernist...)
other:

Facilltation

__ I do not want to speak during the critique; I will take notes as I listen to what you see / say

__ I want to designate a notetaker, to help me keep track of comments

__ I want to designate a respondent, someone who will answer your questions for me

__ I will bring in someone to interview me about the work for the critique, we will both answer questions

__ I want all people to share their thoughts about the work (by speaking or writing)

__ other:

Resources

Feedback

__ I want reviewers to address:

__ my growth over time (over the semester or year)

__ more than one work

__ one work

__ other artists / research related to the work (I want this: written down OR spoken)

__ open calls / grants / residencies / people interested in this topic (written OR spoken)

__ other places where I could improve my technique (written OR spoken)

__ ways that they would remake the work

__ ways that they would make semi-related works

__ the presentation / installation of the work

__ other:

__ I am looking for feedback that is

__ as critical as possible of the work

__ kind, giving the work the benefit of the doubt

__ firing squad (see Judith Leemann's article)

__ don't kill the baby (see Judith Leemann's article)

__ creative response (see Judith Leemann's article)

__ observe – describe – analyze (see Judith Leemann's article)

__ other:

see Observations on forms and patterns of critique by Judith Leemann (2004)

AFFIRMATIONS

I seek progress over perfection
& community over competition

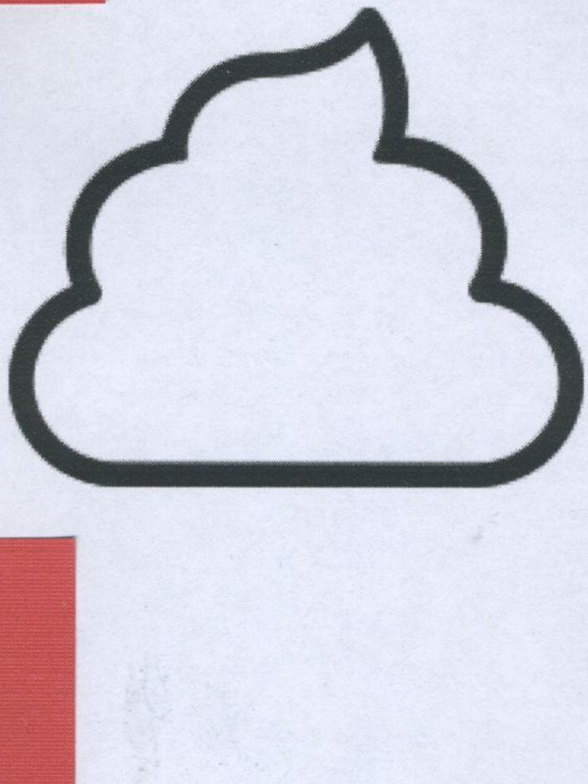
There's more to art than critique

I am proud of my work and its
wonderfully unique characteristics

Base your success on how your art
has enriched your life

The only person I compare myself to is
the person I was yesterday

With critique comes care

Dont let little assholes determine your worth...
seriously

CRITIQUE
is
meant
for
GROWTH!